



# Faces of FAITH

## WELS MISSIONS



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## Dear Fellow Witness,

In a recent Missions blog, one of our home missionaries in Atlanta, Ga., told us about a woman he met at a local festival named “Rachel”. She was an atheist—an atheist with a great deal of anger towards God, other Christians, and her childhood church. As Rachel and the home missionary talked more during their Bible basics lessons, her anger began to soften. She had never heard of God’s unconditional love to sinners before. Through the teaching of law and gospel and by the Holy Spirit’s working, a heart was changed. (To read the full story, visit [wels.net/immediate-blessings-in-atlanta-ga](http://wels.net/immediate-blessings-in-atlanta-ga).)



This story and the many others you’ll read throughout *Faces of Faith* are important reminders of why WELS devotes itself to reaching the lost through home missions. WELS Home Missions currently supports 130 congregations with financial subsidy or district mission board/mission counselor assistance in 35 states, Canada, and English-speaking West Indies. Home Missions also supports more than 32 campus ministries.

Through Home Missions, WELS members have more opportunities to rescue souls from the fires of hell—directing them to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Home Missions has a wonderful

responsibility from our church body to start and support missions so more “Rachels” can joyfully confess faith in the Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Working together for him,*

*Keith Free*

Keith Free  
Home Missions administrator

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# HOME MISSIONS

Every spring, the Board for Home Missions (BHM) and the BHM Executive Committee prioritize requests for new missions and ministry enhancements. In 2018, 23 requests were received. On April 13, 2018, the BHM approved support for seven new mission congregations as well as support to enhance mission-minded ministry at seven other congregations.

## 2018 HOME MISSIONS NEW STARTS

- **Reno, Nev.**—Two area congregations are partnering to start this congregation in the Northern Valleys area of greater Reno. On March 25, 2018, the first worship service was held; 63 people attended.
- **Phoenix, Ariz.**—Crosswalk, Phoenix, is opening a second site to reach out into downtown Phoenix.
- **Joplin, Mo.**—A strong core of WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod members from the two nearest churches are helping support this mission.
- **Brandon, S.D.**—Near Sioux Falls, this new congregation includes core members from two WELS churches and an Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregation.
- **Milwaukee, Wis.**—Grace in downtown Milwaukee, one of WELS' original congregations, is establishing a new location in the area known as the Third Ward.

## Faces of Faith—Meghan

Meghan Wierschke, one of our new members, recently wrote the following words on her Facebook page describing how God blessed her using The Vine:



*It was easy for me to worry about finding a job, moving across the country, or getting acclimated in a new area. But my Father in heaven knows what I need and has surely provided for me through The Vine community. I rolled into town with my trailer in tow, not really knowing what to expect. It's too much of a coincidence not to see the connections. God has put The Vine here to help me get established and to grow in faith, and I hope he will continue to use me to help this congregation take root. We are small in number, but with our outreach mindset we hope to plant seeds of faith in the community so that others may grow to become part of The Vine. I ask that you keep our growing church in your hearts and prayers through this new year, and that the Lord may provide comfort for others through The Vine, as he has done for me!*

*From Kevin Schultz, missionary at The Vine, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho*



## 2018 HOME MISSIONS NEW STARTS—UNSUBSIDIZED

- **Hobart, Wis.**—Mount Olive, Suamico, Wis., is starting a second site in Hobart. The congregation is calling a second pastor to begin this new ministry.
- **Horicon, Wis.**—Members of St. John's, Juneau, Wis., see an opportunity to reach out in nearby Horicon, where 90 members of St. John's live. Saturday worship services began in Horicon in June 2018.

### Faces of Faith—Jeffry

I met Jeffry during my second week of ministry. The millennial man quietly sat on the end of his friend's couch during my first ever visit to a member's home. He never believed in God and had a strong aversion to "religious talk." Somehow, he started checking out a few worship services. Then he started checking out a midweek Bible study. While his worship and Bible study attendance waxed and waned throughout the year, he never completely fell off the radar. Then, in late 2017, Jeffry said, "Pastor, I want to get baptized."

We poured over the Catechism, soaking in every beautiful verse that mentions "washing" or "renewal" or "rebirth" or "baptism." At the end of one of our grueling sessions, his usually calm demeanor changed in a flash and he blurted, "Wow, I really need to get baptized!" On January 21, 2018, God officially made Jeffry a part of his family.

It's for moments like those that pastors and Christian men and women work long hours. Rejection is always personal. Skeptical looks are always hurtful. Sunday statistical progress is often untraceable. But Jeffry is living proof that God works through everyday, gospel-bearing persistence.

*From Ryan Kolander, missionary at Palabra de Vida, Detroit, Mich.*



WELS has more than 550 campus ministries across the United States and Canada. Pastors in these ministries serve students in a variety of ways, including Bible studies, activities, and mailing materials. If you or someone you know is in or entering college, connect with WELS Campus Ministry at [wels.net/campus-ministry](http://wels.net/campus-ministry).



WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) provides loans to mission churches to purchase land and help build worship facilities. CEF grant programs are also a blessing to home missions. Since 1993, more than \$33 million has been granted to mission congregations. Thanks to CEF assistance, 12 home missions have dedicated worship facilities in 2017 and 2018.



## 2018 HOME MISSIONS ENHANCEMENTS

- **Crown of Life, Corona, Calif.**—This multi-site mission currently has four different locations for worship. Home Missions funding will support a third pastor.
- **Faith, Anchorage, Alaska**—A second bilingual pastor will allow Faith to enhance its Hispanic ministry.
- **Grace, Seattle, Wash.**—Two congregations will be combining to restart their ministry in the heart of Seattle. Funding will allow a full-time pastor to again serve at Grace.
- **Ascension, Harrisburg, Penn.**—Remaining members of Ascension are ready to restart their congregation. They have demonstrated they are willing to take on ministry responsibilities and support outreach efforts that will be guided by their next pastor.
- **Shepherd of the Hills, Knoxville, Tenn.**—A group of members are ready to restart their congregation after a longer-term pastoral vacancy. With the congregation back on its feet, they hope to begin a preschool ministry to jump start their outreach efforts.
- **Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.**—Trinity hopes to reach out to a large population of Hispanics in their community by bringing in a bilingual pastor to lead the ministry.
- **Epiphany and First, Racine, Wis.**—These two Racine congregations currently operate a joint Lutheran elementary school. Home Missions funding will allow the school to call a staff minister or teacher to coordinate outreach efforts to unchurched families.

### Faces of Faith—Avery + Haileigh

“Last week I thought Christianity was just about living a certain way, but now I know it’s about Jesus forgiving my sins.”

So said Avery (pictured left) on the Wednesday after she attended a church (our church) for the first time in her life. Except for the gospel itself, this pastor’s ears have perhaps never heard sweeter words.

Haileigh (pictured right), Avery’s friend and fellow junior at Fenton High School, had helped with our soccer camp three weeks earlier. She had come to our church for the first time the very next day, and then brought Avery a couple weeks later. Even though they are the only ones from their respective families who are currently interested in learning more about Jesus, fast forward seven months from that Wednesday: Avery and Haileigh are getting confirmed and Avery is being baptized!

God did it again—he raised a soul from death to life!

*From Nathan Loersch, missionary at Shepherd of the Lakes, Fenton, Mich.*



The multi-site church movement is all about reaching more people with the gospel—and this new strategy has already been blessed with success in many WELS congregations. Having one church in several locations allows congregations to reach different communities while enjoying practical benefits such as shared resources, efficient organization, and cost-effective programs. Home Missions currently supports 23 congregations that are part of multi-site ministries. To learn more about how your congregation might benefit from a multi-site ministry, consider attending the WELS National Multi-Site Conference. Visit [wels.net/missions](http://wels.net/missions) for more information.



*Divine Peace—Rockwall, Tex., campus*



## Faces of Faith—Carter

When I was first starting off my ministry in Laramie, Wyo., I received a phone call from a family friend. His granddaughter was dating a young man named Carter who had just enrolled at the University of Wyoming. Carter (pictured below) was not a church-goer as far he knew, so the request was simple: "Look Carter up when you have a free minute. Who knows, maybe you can share Jesus with him too."

I had been a pastor in a home mission setting for just over six months. I was thrilled to have someone to follow-up with! One problem—I didn't have his contact information. Thankfully, I happened to know a young man who was in the same class as Carter. They were even friends! Next thing I know, Carter is a regular attendee at our weekly campus ministry events and Sunday worship. Carter began taking our Bible basics class and was one of Living Shepherd's first adult confirmands.

Carter has now graduated and has taken a job in the small Wyoming community of Buffalo, about four hours north of Laramie. We don't have a church in Buffalo, so Carter and his fiancé Emily (pictured below) are helping us get our second site off the ground. Currently they worship with us each week via our worship livestream on Facebook. It's our hope that sometime in 2018 the Lord will bless us with a facility in Buffalo where Carter and Emily can begin to invite friends to join them!

*From Peter Zaferos, missionary at Living Shepherd, Laramie, Wyo.*



## Faces of Faith—Seng

At the age of four, my parents (who are shamans) enrolled my siblings and me into Sunday school to keep us occupied. Even though I didn't speak or understand English, being at church made me happy. As I walked into class, I was afraid because I didn't know anyone. I observed and nodded yes to everything. At the end of class, I remember praying for the first time. I didn't understand what to do so my Sunday school teacher held my hands, gently placing them together, brushed her hand down my face to close my eyes, and began to talk. When she talked, I felt at peace. My body was calm, and I felt safe.



Later that day, I asked my sister if her class did the same. She told me, "Yes, it's called praying. We pray when we want to talk to God. When we're happy, mad, sad, or just want to talk." A few months later, my family left the church. Even though I didn't fully understand who God was or what my class taught me, I understood how to pray and continued to throughout my life. Through prayers, God was there at my happiest moments and through my hardest life challenges. Through him I survived an abusive marriage, divorce, custody battle for my two girls, and getting laid off work.

After I was laid off, I accepted a job at a school where I met my current pastor's wife and her brother who were part of the evangelism team at Immanuel Hmong Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minn. As they both encouraged me to continue to seek God and for my small family to visit the congregation, my daughters and I became members in August of 2016. After Pastor Pheng Moua baptized me, I prayed to God, "Even after 26 years you have not forsaken me."

*From Seng Xiong, member at Immanuel Hmong, St. Paul, Minn.*



# JOINT MISSIONS

WELS Joint Missions oversees any mission opportunity that is a combination of both Home and World Missions. This includes people-group ministries (connecting people with the same language and culture) and cross-cultural ministries (outreach from one culture to another).

Joint Missions recognizes that the world is continually shrinking, and our synod's ability to reach even more people-groups seems never-ending. We are committed to connecting our resources to reach all peoples both stateside and abroad. One of the top priorities of Joint Missions is to strengthen the partnership with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in support of the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI), while continuing to focus on current ministry to Hmong, Hispanic, South Asian, Sudanese, and Vietnamese cultures.

- Joint Mission's goal is to establish **15** healthy people-group ministries and identify **15** new people-group ministry opportunities by 2020.
- Hmong theological training in Vietnam through the **Global Hmong Committee** has borne fruit—

the Hmong Fellowship Church in Vietnam has grown from 65,000 to 100,000 members in the past 3 years.

- The communist government in Vietnam has invited WELS to build a **theological training facility** in Hanoi. WELS is currently the only Protestant church with official governmental permission to work with the Hmong in Vietnam.
- **Twenty WELS congregations** currently hold worship in Spanish and English.
- Christ Lutheran Church in Pewaukee, Wis., will be the location of an **International Friendship Center (IFC)** pilot program to reach out to South Asian populations.
- Joint Missions is working closely with **Friends of Vietnam**, a ministry out of Peace in Jesus Lutheran Church in Boise, Idaho, that reaches out by supplying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to universities in Vietnam and assisting students who desire to come to the United States to study at WELS schools.

## Faces of Faith – Thomas

I was in the middle of a Bible basics class when a Sudanese man politely interrupted, "May I join you?" Thomas had been an evangelist in South Sudan for three years before the civil war that erupted in December 2013 forced him to return to Canada, where he is a citizen. A Sudanese friend who had recently joined our congregation had told him, "St. Paul is a good church. They have a good pastor. They teach good doctrine. You should come."

Four years later, Thomas has brought three other Sudanese families to our congregation and has invited many more. A recent Sudanese visitor told me, "Thomas has been inviting me for months. I finally came today." His invitation is the same one Thomas received, "St. Paul is a good church. They have a good pastor. They teach good doctrine. You should come."

But like most Sudanese, Thomas has a strong desire to share the Lutheran teaching he has learned with his people in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. Last year, he traveled to Gambella, Ethiopia, to provide hygiene training and share a gospel pamphlet in the Nuer language entitled, *Do you really have Jesus?* This spring that same group is returning with a Nuer catechism to distribute. Thomas is now a "good" Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) student, who hopes to one day become a "good" pastor, sharing the "good" doctrine among the Sudanese—both at home and abroad.

*From Michael Vogel, Global South Sudanese Committee chairman and pastor at St. Paul, Calgary, Alberta, Canada*





# PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE



The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, in partnership with WELS Joint Missions, guides and assists non-traditional students through their pre-seminary and seminary training, providing a flexible path to ministry.

The PSI has connected with students through congregational ministry to immigrants and refugees here in the United States and Canada, as well as through WELS world mission work. The PSI is able to evaluate and serve these groups that want support, training, and a connection to a church body that shares the gospel message in its truth and purity.

Through the PSI, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professors teach and consult on curriculum at seminaries and Bible institutes around the world that are in fellowship with WELS. Each year the PSI team serves well over 100 students.

## Faces of Faith – Matthew

In July 2015, while in search of a place to worship with my congregation, I met Pastor Klatt of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New Hope, Minn. After reaching doctrinal agreement, my congregation—which consists primarily of African immigrants—began worshiping in Holy Trinity’s sanctuary. Pastor Klatt encouraged me to check out the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) program. What a blessing that turned out to be.

In addition to the congregation I serve here in the U.S., God has privileged me to supervise 27 churches in Liberia, West Africa. Members of my congregation and I travel there twice every year for leadership/pastoral training and an annual church conference. Our last church leadership training seminar was attended by 86 congregational leaders, and over 500 laypeople and leaders attended the general conference held in December 2017. I am thankful for the Lord’s timing as he brought me into contact with Pastor Klatt and the PSI just as the door opened for me to strengthen my connections with these congregations.

Thanks to the various PSI courses I have completed so far, my level of insight has increased. I have a clearer understanding of Christian doctrine from the Word of God. My preaching and teaching styles have changed because I now look at the context of the Scriptures and let the Bible speak for itself rather than basing my words on human reasoning and traditions. Through the PSI courses I learned about the “three alones”: grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone.



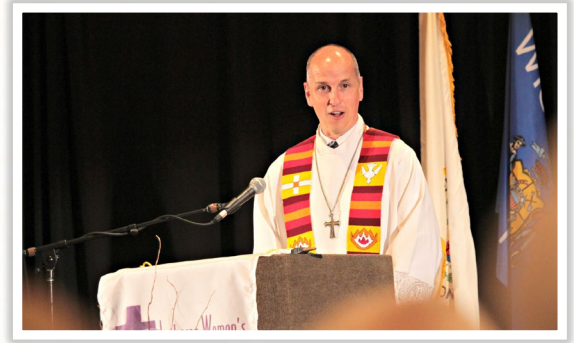
*From Matthew Cephus, church leader at Royal Family Fellowship International Congregation in New Hope, Minn., and leader of 27 churches in Liberia*



## Dear Friends of Missions,

Christ's love is the greatest treasure we share as we walk together toward our heavenly home. It is a treasure that goes to work in our hearts and moves us to share Christ's compassion for the lost. There are so many in this world who do not know that this love in Christ is God's gift to us all. For this reason, WELS World Missions is eager to carry out our calling to preach the good news to every nation. Into a world that desperately needs it, our missionaries and national church partners bring the light of God's Word. With this powerful tool deployed and in the hands of the Lord of the Church, our work is bearing much fruit. You'll hear more stories of the gospel at work throughout *Faces of Faith*.

Our five-man Board for World Missions (BWM)—made up of a combination of pastors, teachers, and laymen—volunteer their time to develop overall strategy for World Missions and appoint members of eight administrative committees. These administrative committees work on behalf of the BWM to facilitate mission outreach in their respective fields. While WELS World Missions work has put us in touch with over 200,000 people, that does not mean our global work is done. Seven billion people live on this planet with us. We have before us the largest mission field the world has ever seen.



Your World Missions team rejoices in the ongoing support of the members of WELS. Your prayers, attention, and gifts allow us to continue this work that is at the heart of being a Christian church body. The numbers in our fellowship in the United States may be stable, but the numbers overseas are booming. The Lord has been using us to share the gospel in expected and unexpected places. God still opens doors. May the Lord bless our work together as we take the treasure of Christ's love and share it with a world that will be lost without it.

# WORLD

Your fellow missionary,

Larry Schlomer  
World Missions administrator



## WORLD MISSIONS

- has a partnership with churches in **50 different nations**;
- celebrates **125 years of mission work** in 2018;
- is in fellowship with more than **105,465 Lutherans** around the world;
- serves more than **75,000 baptized members** in Lutheran churches on our fields;
- has **44 missionaries** in the field conducting outreach and training national pastors;
- supports **13 teachers** and more than **60 laypeople** as they reach out to children and adults with the gospel;
- is exploring outreach opportunities in **14 prospective new mission fields**;
- is training more than **170 men** to become pastors in their own countries; and
- partners with national churches worldwide that have called nearly **400 national workers** who serve the spiritual needs of more than **700 congregations** and preaching stations.





# WORLD MISSIONS

## ONE LATIN AMERICA

The One Latin America (1LA) mission team exists to train any Spanish speaker, no matter where they might be located, on how to read God's Word and share it with others. The 1LA team casts a wide net on the Internet and through social media, with a focus on those who would like to learn how to start small Bible study groups, which, in turn, plants more congregations. Imagine a never-ending chain of people telling each other about Jesus. The team is excited about upcoming opportunities in multiple new nations, including Paraguay and Ecuador, and having a base of operations in Miami, Fla.

## Faces of Faith—David



**David Theys** was a Lutheran without a church. Living in the colonial city of Salta in far northwestern Argentina, the bookstore owner gathered his family around the Word of God, but he was looking to gather together with others. From a friend of a friend he heard about the work that the 1LA team was doing online. He was interested and signed up for a class . . . and then another class.

After demonstrating a deep commitment to biblical teaching and a strong desire to share the gospel with others, David was visited by Missionary Phil Strackbein and his wife. They spent days at David's house discussing what the Bible says. After those conversations, David expressed his desire to become a confirmed, confessional Lutheran and his desire to share the Word with others. In the coming year, David will begin to gather people around the Word of God in Salta while using Academia Cristo materials and communicating with the 1LA mission team. Pray for the effort in Salta, Argentina.

## Fast Facts

- Members of the 1LA team and other trained men in our fellowship offer live, online Bible classes in a program called **Academia Cristo**.
- The Academia Cristo Facebook page recently surpassed **1 million followers**.
- Individuals from every country in Latin America have taken **live classes** with the 1LA team.
- The waiting list for Academia Cristo online classes has over **1,000 names** on it.
- The 1LA team conducts **in-person visits** with those in online classes who are interested in on-the-ground work, value God's Word in its truth and purity, and show gifts to start such work.
- Two 1LA missionaries relocated to **Ecuador** in summer 2018.



## AFRICA

Mission work in Continental Africa is changing. WELS' established missions—Malawi, Zambia, Cameroon, and Nigeria—focus on assisting the national synods and their churches as they mature, while also helping with their pre-seminary and seminary programs. The new work before WELS missionaries is outreach, as individuals and church groups in **nine additional African countries** have reached out to us and the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) for fellowship and theological training. In response to this new gospel call, the One Africa Team was organized to coordinate WELS missionaries and resources. The One Africa Team is accountable for visiting the groups and synods seeking partnerships, teaching confessional Lutheran doctrine, and encouraging mission expansion.



### Fast Facts

- The four established mission fields of Africa (Nigeria, Cameroon, Malawi, and Zambia) make up about **75 percent of all baptized souls** in WELS world mission fields.
- **Exploratory mission work** is occurring in Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.



## Faces of Faith—Stanley

Pastor Stanley Daile's story illustrates Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart." Born in Zambia, Stanley's biological parents gave him up for adoption. Instead of experiencing a tragic childhood of exploitation, Stanley was adopted by LCCA Pastor Akim Daile and grew up wanting to be a pastor himself. As part of the Chitumbuka-speaking minority in Northern Malawi, Stanley was at a slight disadvantage until he mastered the Chichewa tongue spoken by the majority of Malawians. No doubt his buoyant attitude and outgoing personality played a big part in this accomplishment. After six years of study, Stanley was assigned to Mtendere (Peace) Lutheran Church in Malawi, a congregation with a long history of many different pastors. Ten years later, the Lord's hand is evident in this congregation's stability and growth. Mtendere now has an active youth program and is a thriving church body, but Pastor Daile asks, "WELS members, please continue to pray for the youth in our church that they do not fall away." We give thanks that the Lord set apart Pastor Daile to faithfully serve this urban congregation in a neighborhood of crime and poverty.

*From John Roebke, missionary in Africa*



## Faces of Faith—Violet

Violet Chikwatu has always wanted to help: “Malawi is a country where people are suffering from various types of diseases. I have travelled to many places and have seen that we don’t have enough medical personnel to assist. I have a passion to help, which is why I became a nurse.” Even Violet’s pastor at Crown of Life Lutheran Church in Lilongwe, Malawi, saw her passion for helping others at a very young age: “Violet has been talking of working with the Lutheran Mobile Clinic for a very long time. Her knowledge and skills make her a great fit.” Thanks to funds from the CAMM Althea Sauer scholarship fund, Violet enrolled in the Daeyang College of Nursing after finishing school. She successfully passed her nursing exam in 2017 and was offered a full-time position with the Lutheran Mobile Clinic in February 2018. Her trust in God and the blessings God provided her is a visual representation of CAMM’s mission in action.



*From Angela Sievert, CAMM Public Relations Coordinator*

## CENTRAL AFRICA MEDICAL MISSION

The Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) started in 1961 in Lumano, Zambia. Today, CAMM oversees a permanent clinic called the Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre in Zambia on the same property as one of the Lutheran churches of Central Africa. CAMM also operates the Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi that travels to four different villages throughout the week. The buildings used in these villages serve as clinics during the week and as churches on Sundays. The Zambia clinic is completely run by national health care workers, and the Malawi clinic is served by two U.S. employees who work alongside other nationals. Prior to clinic work starting for the day, a brief devotion is given to all who attend. Both clinics focus on providing Christian counseling and testing for HIV, education and treatment of malaria, immunizations, wellness education, and treatment of other minor injuries or illness. By partnering with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa and WELS missionaries, CAMM provides help for the spiritual and physical needs of the people in Zambia and Malawi.



## Fast Facts

- CAMM relies solely on donations to continue operation.
- The Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi saw **43,598 people** in 2017.
- The Zambia clinic hosts **Children’s Health Week** twice a year to provide Vitamin A and deworming supplements.
- An average of **13,187 children** per year, under the age of 5, are seen for wellness visits and immunizations at the Malawi clinic.
- **6,986 patients** tested positive and received treatment for malaria at the Malawi clinic in 2017.



## ASIA-PACIFIC RIM

WELS' mission work in the Asia-Pacific Rim occurs in a wide variety of countries and cultures—from Buddhist Thailand to Muslim Indonesia to Communist Vietnam to Roman Catholic Philippines. While each field is unique, the focus remains the same. WELS seeks to provide solid theological training to local workers, who in turn conduct gospel ministry in a way fitting for their culture. Some of the fields are well-established; like Indonesia, where the national church runs a fully accredited seminary. In other fields, opportunities are just beginning to present themselves. In Vietnam and the Philippines, the Lord is connecting us with people who are hungry for the refreshing truth of the gospel. In many of these countries, WELS' work is done in partnership with groups like Multi-Language Publications, the Pastoral Studies Institute, and WELS Christian Aid and Relief.



## Fast Facts

- In the 3 years WELS has been providing theological training to the leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church in Vietnam, the church body has **grown from 65,000 to 100,000** members and formed 53 new churches.
- WELS is the only Protestant church with **official governmental permission** to work with the Hmong in Vietnam.
- The communist Vietnamese government has invited WELS to build a **theological training facility** in the capital city of Hanoi—*what an amazing opportunity!*
- Gereja Lutheran Indonesia (GLI) continues to build congregations in a nation that is home to **12.7 percent** of the world's Muslim population.
- In the **Philippines**, future called workers are connecting with WELS via the Internet.
- Professors from **Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary** regularly teach courses in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

## Faces of Faith—Stefanus



Stefanus came from a small village in Indonesia. His parents had come to faith when he was a small boy, offering their home as a gathering place until a small church building was erected by Gereja Lutheran Indonesia (GLI), WELS' sister church body in Indonesia. Already at the age of 15, Stefanus sensed a distinct difference between the faith of his ancestors and the teachings of the Bible. The former was a law-based system consisting of rules and regulations, which he had failed to keep as a child. The latter was based on

God's undeserved love for sinners. In the Bible he saw his sins, but he also saw his Savior and his salvation.

Life took Stefanus away from his small village but not away from his church. The GLI pastor from his new town visited him faithfully, and it was not long before the idea of becoming a pastor himself was planted in his heart.

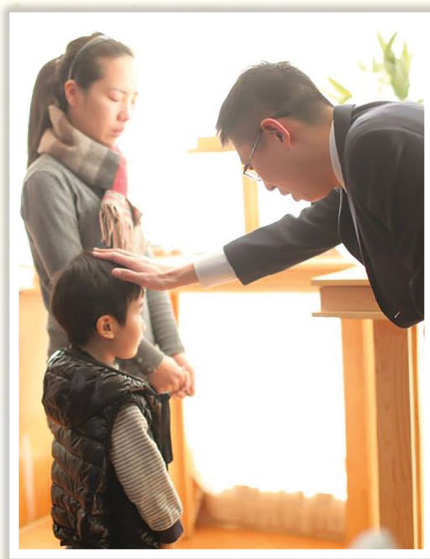
Stefanus is now a pastor in the small village he grew up in. Recently he was chosen to serve as the chairman of a key GLI administrative board that governs Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Lutheran, the theological seminary of GLI. Whether in the congregation among his family and friends, or in the classroom full of young men training for ministry, he is a blessing to GLI as he continues to tell generations of God's mighty acts.

*From Greg Bey, friendly counselor in Indonesia*



## EAST ASIA

Due to government policies in East Asia aimed at restricting Christian activities, security is an ever-present concern as WELS works in East Asia. Local leaders are on the front lines of ministry, faithfully carrying on gospel work while missionaries assist leaders in the background. More than 500 souls are being served the Bread of Life each week. Because of security concerns, groups cannot be too large. Sermon-based Bible studies are being used for groups without a shepherd. Downloadable video sermons feed God's people, and prepared questions help the leader guide discussion afterwards.



Asia Lutheran Seminary in Hong Kong is using online instruction to extend the reach of worker training. Exciting opportunities abound as they blend live teaching with Internet-based learning platforms. They offer training for lay workers leading groups, as well as pastoral training for full-time students. Seminarians gather monthly in a central location to meet face-to-face with a professor for a week. All serve as leaders or helpers in their home churches.

## Fast Facts

- There are currently **7** congregations and **11** church plants in East Asia.
- **150 people** were baptized in the last two years.
- **5** national pastors serve God's people full-time in East Asia.
- **20** other "tent-maker" leaders shepherd new groups that are starting throughout the country.
- At Asia Lutheran Seminary, there are **6 full-time seminarians** and **22 men** enrolled in **ministry training**.
- **11** nationals teach ministry training courses at Asia Lutheran Seminary.

## Faces of Faith—Larry

Sometimes you're looking for a wife, and God wants to give you eternal life. Ask Larry. . . . Fifteen years ago, Larry lived in Hong Kong but didn't know Jesus. He then met a girl who was a member at a South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM) church. She made it clear to him, "If you want to spend time with me on Sunday, you know where I am." He came to church, but only to chase a girl.

There were no other Christians in his family. Larry felt he could handle life by himself without God. But sitting in the church next to his girlfriend, he heard God's Word through WELS missionaries and local pastors. His doubts about Jesus gradually disappeared. He got married, and a year later he was baptized. Larry now comes every Sunday with his wife and two children. He's the head of the evangelism committee. He's the first to talk with non-Christian visitors. He's not afraid to tell his story. You can start out with wrong motives, but God doesn't care. Ask Larry. He found a wife and hope in eternal life!



*From Rob Siirila, missionary in Hong Kong*



## SOUTH ASIA

WELS mission work in South Asia reaches into India, Pakistan, and Nepal.



## Fast Facts

- Since 2002, our mission in Nepal has grown from 2 people to **4,000 members** and is in 33 of the country's 77 districts.
- Despite threats from suicide bombers and the Taliban, the church in Pakistan has grown to **58 house churches, 21 Sunday Schools** with 891 children, and 10 non-formal schools where children who work all day in the fields learn how to read and write.
- Nepali Christians have opened a door for outreach to **Tibetan refugees**. When they return to their homeland of Tibet, our prayer is that they share the gospel with others.
- Plans are being made to open a **Bible institute** in Pakistan in 2018, where leaders will be trained in God's Word and learn how to teach his Word to others.

## Faces of Faith—Ashok + Vijay

What does WELS need to spread the good news of Jesus Christ in a country where few people speak English? You really need two men. One who has been seminary trained to train other men to be pastors, and one who has been seminary trained to translate materials into the language that the people speak. By God's grace we have two such men in Southern India. **Pastor Ashok Rao** and **Pastor Vijay Kumar** were in the first class to graduate from Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries' seminary in 2002. In the 15+ years since their graduation, these two men have faithfully served their church. Pastor Ashok was originally a school teacher. After his graduation he stepped back into the classroom as an instructor for those who were beginning their training to be a pastor. And Pastor Vijay, an Indian university graduate, took up the work of translating materials into the Telugu language. These materials are now used in more than 150 congregations. We thank the Lord for these men and the blessing that their work has been for thousands of others, and we pray that they will continue to serve for years to come.

*From Mark Rieke, friendly counselor in India*





## Faces of Faith—Pakistan

There it was—a booklet about Jesus, hidden in a crack at the top of a wall in a public bathroom. Though she was a Muslim, “Rasham” started to read it. She was safe here . . . no one would see her. The more she read, the more she wanted to learn. She answered the questions at the end of every chapter and took the test at the end of the book. “Who left this booklet in the bathroom?” she wondered, “Someone like me is reading this and doesn’t want anyone to see her.” She knew a person could be killed if they were seen reading Christian literature.

Rasham saw a cleaning woman and wondered, “Could she be the one?” She approached her and asked, “Did you hide this book in the bathroom?” Caught off guard the cleaning lady simply replied, “Yes.” Quickly Rasham told her, “I, too, have been reading this book. Do you have more?”

She knew where to find more. Thanks to the cleaning woman, Rasham studied all 12 booklets in the Bible Teaching Series from Multi-Language Publications. She even took them to her family and studied them with her husband and children. Thanks be to God that this family was able to learn more about Jesus!



## MULTI-LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

Multi-Language Publications (MLP) has printed more than 2.9 million items in more than 52 languages to date. Today, MLP has incorporated audio, video, and online training resources to its offerings. The MLP Christian literature library is available to assist and enhance outreach for churches in fellowship with WELS and for use in places where WELS does not have resident missionaries. The majority of MLP products are evangelism and Bible study materials to be used by anyone who sees a need for ministering to others in Christ.



### Our Plan

- Reach **100 million people** with evangelism materials in 10 years
- See **200 million people** using discipleship materials in 10 years

“First of all I thank MLP who printed such an informative book. I got this book and studied and was blessed. By studying, I came to know about Jesus’ life. I thank Jesus who died for my sins and gave me eternal life. Now I am saved.”



## EUROPE

WELS World Missions conducts gospel outreach throughout Europe, preaching Christ's grace in Russia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine while supporting sister church bodies in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Latvia, and the Czech Republic. The focus of European mission work is changing. Instead of leading congregations, missionaries will focus on equipping and training national pastors to lead their own congregations. The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) is partnering in this work, making training visits to Germany, Sweden, Russia, and Ukraine.



WELS' only resident missionary in Europe, Rev. Luke Wolfgramm (middle), works closely with national pastors Alexei Fehringer (left) and Arkady Sedelnikov (right) of the Concord Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia.

## Faces of Faith – Itsov

God can turn any adversity into unexpected blessing. **Iliyan Itsov**, a Roma (or gypsy) from Bulgaria, suffered injuries from a serious car accident early on in life. While he was recovering, his pastor asked him to consider becoming a pastor in the Bulgarian Lutheran Church. After completing the three-year seminary program in Ukraine, a different issue presented itself: The Bulgarian Lutheran Church had no place for him to serve. The WELS Board for World Missions stepped in and called Iliyan to begin a new mission effort, called Outreach to Roma.

Following the example of St. Paul in Acts, Itsov gathers interested people in a village, asks them to select a leader, and then provides that leader with training and materials to use. Itsov may visit two or three times a month, but in his absence the leader conducts worship by reading sermons Itsov provides. Five groups, scattered across Bulgaria, are worshipping regularly. In addition, the Outreach to Roma van regularly hauls seven or eight people to services in Dunavtsi, Bulgaria.

Even after Itsov battled serious health issues, the Lord continues to use Itsov's ministry. During a worship service in the village of Zlataritsa in November 2017, 21 people were baptized. In March 2018, 20 people were confirmed there. We pray that Outreach to Roma will see a growing number brought to the gospel as God turns the adversity of Roma people's earthly lives into eternal blessings.

*From John F. Vogt, WELS Regional Coordinator for Eastern Europe*





## APACHE RESERVATION

2018 marks the 125th anniversary of WELS' world mission work on the Apache reservation in Arizona. To celebrate their history, Apache Christians look forward—to the hundreds of Apache family members and neighbors who still need to hear the gospel, and to the 535 other Native American tribes in North America who do not know Jesus as their Savior. Three ministries have been selected as areas of focus for this special anniversary year:

1. **Apache Christian Training School (ACTS):** ACTS provides training and resources to prepare Apache Christians for ministry leadership on the reservation. Expansion is needed to meet the needs of current congregations and train workers for future outreach to other reservations.
2. **Lutheran Church of the Open Bible, Whiteriver, Ariz.:** Additional trained workers are needed as Open Bible looks to expand outreach opportunities, small group study and support groups, addiction recovery ministry, grief counseling, youth ministry, and worship opportunities.
3. **Peridot-Our Savior's Lutheran School:** With enrollment rising from 75 to 130 in four years, expansion is needed to catch up with growth and prepare for additional gospel outreach in the future.



### Three-Phase Outreach Plan

- **Expand** current ministry at ACTS, Lutheran Church of the Open Bible, and Peridot-Our Savior's Lutheran School.
- **Connect** Apache Christians across the 4-million-acre reservation and within nine current congregations via a new website, preparing and encouraging all church members for personal evangelism.
- **Begin** outreach to the 535 other Native American tribes in North America.

## Faces of Faith—Bernard

Bernard Dale is a shining light in the Apache Lutheran Church. He continues to take Apache Christian Training School (ACTS) classes in hopes to serve more effectively as a leader in the church, the Apache community, and prayerfully one day in a paid position! But life and service hasn't been easy. Bernard, a life-long member of Shepherd in the Pines Lutheran Church in McNary, Ariz., fell away from God's way. He got involved in drugs and alcohol, and one night sustained nearly-fatal stab wounds in an attack. In his state of injury, feeling worthless and useless, he fell into depression. Once he came back to church, he started to feel comfortable again and was asked to serve. First in small ways: cleaning, helping at events, going to Bible study. Now he hungers for the deep study of God's Word; attends Bible class several times a week; and volunteers at church, in the recovery ministry, at children's music camps, and more! Bernard says, "Serving the Lord feels great. . . . Try it, don't give up, because it'll make your day awesome!"

*From Debbie Dietrich, Native American mission communication coordinator*





Open to **WELS members** of all ages and backgrounds  
with a heart for mission work

# WELS Mission Journeys

The **new** WELS program for  
short-term mission trips

WELS Mission Journeys, the official WELS program for short-term mission trips, provides an opportunity for all WELS members to walk together in the Great Commission. Through **church- or school-based volunteer trips** to WELS mission fields at **home** and **abroad**, members have the opportunity to engage in Christian service. Pre-trip training led by a congregational team leader equips volunteers to have significant impact during their trip. While volunteering, the learning and sharing of outreach ideas will allow teams to explore how they can use their God-given abilities to lead an outreach event upon their return home. With the Lord's blessing, these trips will inspire a lifelong journey of service and outreach for all who volunteer.

Want to learn more about how you and your congregation can get involved?  
**Visit [wels.net/missionjourneys](http://wels.net/missionjourneys).**